

## **RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF PERSONS IN SONOMA COUNTY EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**

WHEREAS, the right to housing is recognized in Article 25 of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), stating that “everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control,” and in Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) which guarantees the right to housing as part of the right to an adequate standard of living;

WHEREAS, homelessness is a problem of crisis proportions in Sonoma County reflected in declarations of the existence of a housing emergency by both the Santa Rosa City Council and the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors;

WHEREAS, sufficient options do not exist in Sonoma County to address the needs of all those without shelter, including the significant portion of the homeless who require special accommodations due to physical and/or mental disabilities;

WHEREAS, local government has taken and continues to take aggressive action in eliminating unsanctioned encampments without providing acceptable short or long term housing options for all residents without shelter (while acknowledging that some of those displaced from camps have been housed), and thus falling short of our community’s obligation to honor the human rights of all residents;

WHEREAS individuals experiencing homelessness in Sonoma County - and organizations advocating for those individuals - have raised a series of facts and allegations outlining human rights violations suffered by those without shelter, specifically as to regular disbanding of encampments without providing adequate options for shelter, and also relates to taking actions that effectively criminalize homelessness; and,

WHEREAS, homeless individuals are singled out and fined for nuisance infractions such as loitering as well as cited and/or arrested for offenses such as illegal camping and trespassing, contravening the U.N. Committee of the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which has declared that, “criminalizing homelessness and its associated activities when people have nowhere else to go constitutes cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment” in violation of United Nations Article 9; and,

WHEREAS, homeless encampments that exist without adequate resources in the form of wrap around services, security, access to clean water, restrooms, and the means for maintaining basic health and hygiene have proven unsuccessful;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT on Tuesday, August 28, 2018, the Sonoma County Commission on Human Rights formally request that the Board of Supervisors and the Santa Rosa City Council designate and fund one or more safe camping areas, for immediate use by refugees, with security, hygiene and sanitation facilities, trash collection, case management and all other appropriate services as needed; and that officials in all jurisdictions work to designate such authorized areas in all county districts, with adequate funding to preserve Constitutional and ADA rights and;

MAY IT ALSO BE RESOLVED THAT in addition to addressing immediate needs with sanctioned encampments with services, that the Board of Supervisors and Santa Rosa City Council with all due haste create and fund sanctioned transitional villages with small living structures such as garden sheds with windows and lockable doors and/or tiny homes with all services as described above; this component is the logical continuum of the Housing First model designed to provide permanent housing solutions for all homeless individuals who seek housing.